An Inaugural

Dissertation on

Rest

as a remedy in Diseases.

C F Wilstack
admitted March 4th 1820

medical vi
the phrases
both in th

M

any individ
cannot help
indebted fo
is taken of
operation.

In

it is like
negative
unquestionably
in all infla
exercise, when
the body is s

Dissertation &c

The consideration of Rest in a medical view is extremely interesting: its operation (if the phraseology may be admitted) is of importance, both in the prevention and cure of Diseases.

Not wishing to detract from the merits of any individual article of the Materia Medica, I yet cannot help beleiving that very many of them are indebted for much of their celebrity to the care which is taken of patients during their supposed or real operation.

In relation to the Modus Operandi of Rest it is - like Cold, to be regarded as having rather a negative than a positive agency; - Exercise is unquestionably a Stimulus - hence its injurious effects in all inflammatory diseases; in asthenic diseases, exercise, when proportioned to the debilitated state of the body is salutary - but if too great, it induces

ity and augme
ions acts like
a stimulus - l
ratively - an
disorders.

The good
ion patients con
proper adaptation
ce of every impr
of disease in
the affected pa
ing with cand
tation of tin bo
legs, are hale
ion of the musc
ut the patient
ntes often bec
ing of each cas
ing to be used.
Surgically cond

debility and augments the disease: – In this respect then, exercise acts like ale other stimulants; it being therefore a stimulus – Rest which is the negative of it, must act sedatively – and hence its use in all inflammatory disorders.

The good effects of Rest are obtained by Keeping our patients confined to an horizontal posture – by the proper adaptation of Splints and bandages – by the absence of every improper stimulus – Carved splints, in cases of disease in joints – formed so accurately as to fit the affected parts, and rendered comfortable by stuffing with carded wool, cotton, tow or flax: – the adaptation of tin boots in cases of inflamed ulcers on the legs, are valuable – not only as they prevent the motion of the muscles of the part, but as they also prevent the patient from rising & walking – Other apparatus often become proper – the particular circumstances of each case will readily suggest the proper articles to be used.

Surgically considered, Rest is of extreme importance

without rest
would be of
ingredient i
United States
clusively by
lows us to
advantages. –
ly, in comm
lantia – obser
and to one
preferable to t
In all
certainly one o
mation and
are indispensabl
dications whe
ease – prevent
from being ca
cuffion of tho
rapid circulation

— without rest, all the other remedies for inflammation would be of little avail, it is indeed an indispensable ingredient in the antiphlogistic regimen — and as in the United States, the majority of diseases are managed exclusively by the antiphlogistic plan of treatment, it behoves us to be peculiarly careful to insist upon its advantages. — My regretted tutor the late Professor Dorsey, in commencing the consideration of the class Stimulantia — observed — that in the proportion of One thousand to one, are the articles of the class Evacuantia preferable to those of the Stimulantia (Manst notes.).

In all Surgical diseases of the Head — rest is certainly one of our best remedies — to prevent inflammation and its consequences; a low diet — depletion — rest are indispensable. — Nature — always correct in the indications which she presents us for the cure of disease — prevents the circulation ~~preven~~ of the blood from being carried on too rapidly in cases of Concussion of the Brain — "the final cause of the languid circulation which succeeds a blow on the head,

is probably the
as well to rem
ainlew, as to pr
of how diet a

In the
best plan of p
to do nothing
reacted; - to
appear to be
nature to pro
subsequently a
the case by

How
ered, except
and allowing
perfect rest
rest is eff
affected with
whether the i
widely given b

is probably the prevention of extravasation" (Dorsey's El. Surg.) - as well to remove bad consequences after they have arisen, as to prevent them - the perseverence in the use of low diet and rest is necessary.

In the first stage of Concussion of the Brain, the best plan of procedure is to refrain altogether from action; - to do nothing at all; - to wait until the system has reacted; - to withhold stimulants, although they may appear to be indicated; - to trust to the efforts of nature to produce a reaction in the system; - and subsequently after reaction has taken place, to treat the case by venesection - low diet purges - rest.

How could an inflamed eye ever be recovered, except by abstracting the stimulus of light and allowing that delicate organ to be kept at perfect rest? remaining in a dark room and at rest is essential to the well being of patients affected with opthalmia: - it is equally important whether the inflammation be excited by a wound rudely given by a stone &c. or by the more delicate

needle or Knife
tion of an op
the texture of
our patients
On in
look for a co
suicide; - cou
to keep the p
bruises, almost
in a great m
Is in
should always
thigh, the le
in every case
admit of, is t
cus: exceptio
-losis is suspec
favourable pos
the member t
dislocated; if i

needle or knife of the operator, – whether after the extraction of an opaque lens – after couching – after lacerating the texture of the lens or capsule – it is proper to restrict our patients from the use of their eyes.

In inflammations of the joints we should in vain look for a cure if we allowed our patients to take any exercise; – confinement to bed and the use of carved splints to keep the parts at rest, are highly serviceable. Sprains, bruises, almost all accidents to which we are liable, depend in a great measure upon rest for their ultimate removal.

Is inflammation seated in muscular parts? they should always be relaxed. – if on the posterior part of the thigh, the leg must be flexed and the thigh extended; in every case the greatest relaxation that the parts will admit of, is that which is best adapted to accelerate the cure: exceptions to this rule exist, in cases where anchylosis is suspected to be about to take place; here the most favourable position that can be chosen in order to allow the member to be of the greatest service, should be selected; if it be the elbow that is affected a flexed

tion should be
On wounds
ing to the hemor
tuation to be u
ion, the sides
in order that
s being converte
ts are injured a
gestive is to be
ned by the ac
s are produced,
replenishing
forming bone, te
wounds has be
The great
illustrated by ele
had nothing do
ing their woun
than house ale
ught to the hos

position should be preferred; for the leg a straight one.

In wounds, the treatment consists, (after putting a stop to the hemorrhage,) in placing the injured parts in a situation to be uninfluenced by art; if it be a simple incision, the sides are to be drawn together and kept so, in order that union may be effected; the effused blood being converted into living flesh: if the adjacent parts are injured and contused, rest is equally proper; - a poultice is to be applied - the deadened parts are removed by the action of the absorbent vessels, granulations are produced, filling up the cavity of the wound, and replenishing the parts which had been removed, "becoming bone, tendon, muscle or skin, according as the wound has been in any of these parts." (Dorsey's El. Sug.)

The great value of rest in gun shot wounds, is illustrated by Mr. Hunter in the cases of four Frenchmen, who had nothing done for them for four days after receiving their wounds, as they had hid themselves in a farm house all that time," and when they were brought to the hospital their wounds were only

defined Super
it is contrary
on our Knowl
wounds simp
to small, sho
tory to Som
Fr
of bony matter
injury; if re
through the w
get the fractu
with the limb
In
permitted to re
of their not al
properly - yet no
or proper: perm
must be insiste
means - gradually
bands, and - a

dressed superfically, and they all got well" (Hunter.)
"it is contrary to all the rules of common Surgery, founded on our knowledge of the animal oeconomy, to enlarge wounds simply as such: no wound let it be ever so small, should be made larger, except when preparatory to something else." (Hunter).

Fractures of bones are cured by the deposition of bony matter from the arteries in the vicinity of the injury; if rest was not enjoined and strictly enforced, though the uniting medium would certainly be deposited, yet the fractured extremities of the bones would unite with the limb distorted and disfigured.

In fractures - although the muscles cannot be permitted to remain permanently contracted - in consequence of their not allowing the broken ends of the bones to unite properly - yet no violent effort to extend them is desirable or proper: permanent and long continued extension must be insisted upon, and carried into effect by mild means - gradually from day to day tightening the extending bands, and - as it were - coaxing the muscles to cease

their contracti
indulgence, i
there is often
exactly when
perhaps little
harmless.

Does
ges in cases
mitted: do
ceedings? - th

The
ing the luxate
nations, by me
however a rec
necessary that
point; otherwis
take place, an
reproduce a rec

Blo
the first importa

their contraction - and allowing Nature free and unrestrained indulgence, in order that she may accomplish her designs. there is often however great judgment required to know exactly when and how to interfere, in cases which demand perhaps little or nothing more than rest to render them harmless.

Does inflammation exist to a considerable degree in cases of fracture? - all bandages must be omitted: does it come on after the application of the dressings? they must be laid aside.

The treatment of Dislocations consists in reducing the luxated extremities of the bones to their natural situations, by means of force, properly applied; to prevent however a recurrence of the dislocation it is absolutely necessary that the limb, affected should be kept perfectly quiet; otherwise, a repetition of the luxation will probably take place, and require all the means in our power to reproduce a reduction.

Bloodletting as a remedy in dislocations is of the first importance; its introduction into practice, carried

to the extent
application, i
which surgery
anatomy in th
tion to the res
the dislocated
their replacem
produced by t
favourable tha
kept up by
ideally; it pro
power.

In cases
inflammation
the surgeon is
parts remain
ination may sub

The co
surgical operation
of the times of

to the extent that is demanded to insure success to its application, is one of the many great improvements which surgery has received from the present professor of Anatomy in this University - it is beneficial in exact proportion to the rest which it affords the muscles surrounding the dislocated bones, and whose forcible contraction prevents their replacement; - hence - the complete relaxation that is produced by the remedy when fainting ensues is the most favourable that can possibly happen :- continued nausea, kept up by small doses of tartarized antimony, acts similarly; it produces a very great prostration of muscular power.

In cases of dislocations, as in fractures, where great inflammation and tumefaction have come on before the surgeon is called, it is absolutely necessary that the parts remain undisturbed, in order that the inflammation may subside.

The complexity of the ancient apparatus for performing surgical operations, originated in the ignorance of the practitioners of the times of the powers of nature in curing disease - to

discoveries of the
the practice ins
their former usefu
the simplicity
the number of in
an extreme dim
be required, a
P. Pott.)

Hemorrha
distraction from
ow is of great a
should always
ction is thereby
quently checked
the hand, it
many cases has
by this mano
ma should be
Real directed
great moment

the discoveries of that great man John Hunter, in relation to the processes instituted by Nature, in restoring parts to their former usefulness and elegance, - we are indebted for the simplicity which at present prevails; "reduction of the number of instruments to be used in an operation, and an extreme simplicity and plainness in those which may be required, are part of the merit of modern Surgery." (Pott.)

Hemorrhage can more frequently be restrained by abstraction from exercise than by any other single means. position is of great advantage in hemorrhage, the bleeding vessels should always be placed in an elevated position, their action is thereby diminished and the hemorrhage is consequently checked - if the hemorrhage is from the vessels of the hand, it should be elevated above the head; in many cases has Dr. Physick succeeded in restraining bleeding by this management; if it is from the nose, the head should be held erect or thrown backwards.

Zeal directed by ignorance, frequently commits errors of great moment to the welfare and even to the

of those comm
now is the sou
= the patie
to the salute
his inscrutable
tracted by a
times occasiona
although, as
very bleeding
proves the
," a large
by a small s
at first very
return, until
the patient
Dowey adds "
patient would
interference
last, his life
Dr elevate

lives of those committed to its charge: Officiousness in a surgeon is the source of much greater evils than negligence itself = the patient, if deserted by his physician, is left to the salutary guidance of nature, the operations of her inscrutable agency produces effects which if not counteracted by art, are highly beneficial: even large arteries occasionally heal after having been wounded, and although, as a general rule it is proper to take up every bleeding vessel of magnitude, yet the following case proves the possibility of their doing well if left alone, " a large artery, (probably the femoral,) was opened by a small sword, and although the stream of blood was at first very alarming, yet it soon ceased, and did not return, until a surgeon forced his probe into the vessel, and the patient died of hemorrhage" (Dorsey's, El. Surg.) Dr. Dorsey adds " there is great reason to believe that the patient would have recovered, but for the impru=dent interference of his surgeon." — had he been left at rest, his life had been preserved.

To elevate the feet of the bedstead is a prac=

ve recommende
Philadelphia M
ulcers of the le
mation seated
per that such
their beds.

To Dr. C
mode of pra
ous Corains,
he bowels co
bsolute rest o

In ca
e aneurism co
rest our only

After
tients is to be
Opium is freque
ausea is cap

Tha

tice recommended by Dr. Physick, and persisted in, in the Philadelphia Alms house with great benefit, in inflamed ulcers of the legs, and indeed in every case of inflammation seated in the lower extremities; it is highly proper that such patients should be rigidly confined to their beds.

To Dr. Physick we also owe the introduction of a mode of practice truly efficient and valuable in Morbus Coxarius, it consists in the repeated purging of the bowels with cream of tartar & jalap, and the absolute rest of the hip joint by means of a caves splint.

In cases of Aneurism rest is of importance, & in aneurism which cannot be operated upon, it is almost our only resort.

After every capital operation in Surgery, the patient is to be confined to bed and kept at rest; Opium is frequently administered, and by its anodyne powers is capable of affording great relief.

That hideous disease pulmonary consumption,

which appear
ulcers of the
or adapt a
motion, and
respiration
frequently th
that disease
the lungs o
in them in
ge in the dub
who affords
taking on t
the misfort
is healing,
at length in
produce a
other parts o
favourable
should they
might

which appears to be almost necessarily fatal, consists of ulcers of the lungs; could we by any means in our power adapt an apparatus to keep these organs free from motion, and yet allow the circulation of the blood and respiration to be continued, we should perhaps more frequently than we do at present succeed in curing that disease: Dissections prove to us that ulcers of the lungs are capable of healing, cicatrices being found in them in numberless instances: - the lodgment of balls, &c in the substance of the lungs, remaining there for years, also affords a proof of the powers of the lungs, in taking on the curative process in cases of ulceration; the misfortune in phthisis is, that while one ulcer is healing, two or three others are forming - and which at length involving the whole substance of the lungs, produce a fatal termination: by rest, ulcers in other parts of the body are allowed to heal, if the same favorable state could be extended to these organs, why should they not be healed as readily?

Might not an incision be cautiously made between

the ribs, avoid
ness or probe
to collapse?
by means of
wounds, whe
substance of t
healed as in
that it was p
suppuration w
should remai
thought it a
silver to mo
of the other, a
cumbent of th
have been pe
but one side

Whe
wound is cond
visionary to
think I have

the ribs, (avoiding the intercostal artery) and a silver canula or probe be introduced, in order to permit one lung to collapse? the practicability of continuing respiration by means of one lung, is shown in cases of gun shot wounds, where a free passage made by a ball into the substance of the lungs and adhesions forming, the wound is healed as in other situations: Mr. Hunter even supposed that it was possible to habituate ourselves to continue respiration with one side of the thorax while the other should remain at rest - his words are "I have often thought it a great pity, that we do not accustom ourselves to move one side of the thorax independent of the other, as we from habit move one eyelid independent of the other" and again, Mr. Hunter says, "I have seen people breathe pretty freely who have had but one side to expand". (on Inflm. Gun Shot Wds. &c).

When the intractable nature of this formidable disease is considered, it may not perhaps be deemed visionary to expect that even such a remedy as that which I have proposed may at length be resorted to:

condemned
our duty to
prospect of a
Rest exc
precise invaci
on a disorder
stomach, or any
creased, but a
integrity of the
pretty exact ra
of the circulati
gain any advan
removal depend
we must atte
in a state of
among other ane
the absorbents
useful: dropsy
not curable
In inf

- condemned to witness the inefficacy of our medicines, it is our duty to resort to every means which affords the least prospect of arresting the ravages of disease and death.

Rest excites the action of the lymphatic system — as exercise invariably accelerates the circulation of the blood, and in a disordered state of any of the functions of the heart or stomach, or any of the vital organs; produces not only an increased, but a febrile condition of the pulse — and as the integrity of the absorbing apparatus is always impaired in a pretty exact ratio to the removal from the healthy standard of the circulatory system — I hence infer, that in order to gain any advantages in the treatment of those diseases whose removal depend upon the due activity of the lymphatics, — we must attend particularly to keep the arterial system in a state of comparative rest; — this can be effected, among other means, by abstracting from exercise; — to excite the absorbents we must apply sedatives to the blood-vessels: Dropsy; Glandular diseases generally; though not curable by rest, are essentially benefitted by it.

In inflammatory fevers it is essential that our

patients be kept
aggravating eve
condition of the
typhus fever, is
tients in the
breathing from

During
friends and a
that rest which
productive of mu
healy and poor
the recovery of

The th
neat dissenice
eatable food no
of disease, is a
ing the necessa
stomach.

patients be kept at rest, the stimulus of exertion uniformly aggravating every symptom: not less in the directly opposite condition of the system - that is - in the lowest grade of typhus fever, is rest indispensible; - in many cases have patients in the Philadelphia almshouse died in the act of walking from their beds to a close-stool.

During convalescence from disease, the visits of friends and acquaintances - by depriving the patient of that rest which is essential to his complete recovery - are productive of much injury - hence also, the wards of hospitals and poor houses are ill calculated to accelerate the recovery of patients who have been very low.

The stimulus of light, of noise &c. is also of great disservice: the improper use of articles of indigestible food when recovering from an acute attack of disease, is a frequent cause of relapse - by preventing the necessary rest of that important organ, the stomach.